

South Gloucestershire Council

QUEST FOR QUALITY

Policy for Quality Improvement in Early Years and Childcare



Policy for Quality Improvement in Early Years and Childcare

RATIONALE

The policy has been designed to support a culture which promotes South Gloucestershire's vision for Children and Young People. South Gloucestershire's approach to quality improvement in early years and childcare will:

- respect uniqueness and value diversity
- nurture development and learning
- value play
- celebrate achievement
- cultivate innovation
- empower all in their own continuous improvement

AIM**High Quality Makes the Difference**

The overarching aim of this policy is to secure the best possible quality in early years provision and childcare so that all South Gloucestershire's children and young people, including those most at risk, may benefit from a safe and healthy childhood in which they enjoy life and achieve well. Achieving this aim requires a shared commitment to engaging communities and fostering respectful partnerships with parents¹ and families.

- High aspiration is central to South Gloucestershire's aim. We want children to achieve better than the minimum expectations and to benefit from provision which is at least good rather than merely adequate. Satisfactory is a starting point for a journey of continuous improvement – a foundation on which to build, not a goal in itself.
- Every provider in early years and childcare contributes to the safety, well-being, learning and development of all children. All providers promote children and young people's achievement and play their own part in helping to ensure that those most vulnerable to underachievement catch up with those who have been able to enjoy a better start in life.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to strengthen reflection, self-evaluation and continuous quality improvement in all early years and childcare provision by:

- building on the capacity of all settings to secure their own continuous improvement and sustainability;
- establishing a unified and collaborative Local Authority² approach to quality improvement;
- setting out the Local Authority's approach to providing settings with monitoring, support and challenge, according to need;
- ensuring that all stakeholders share collective responsibility for the achievement and well-being of all children in South Gloucestershire;
- establishing a shared understanding of the respective roles and responsibilities of settings and the Local Authority for improving outcomes for children;
- ensuring that robust reflective practice underpins improvement;
- promoting the identification, dissemination and celebration of best practice; and
- enabling all settings to engage with the developing local and national agenda.

¹ Throughout this document, the term "parent" means mothers, fathers, carers and other adults with responsibility for caring for a child including adoptive parents, foster carers and family (kinship) carers.

² Throughout this policy the term Local Authority refers not only to elected members and their officers but also, where appropriate, to those individuals and organisations commissioned to work on their behalf.

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PRINCIPLES

- All children should have the opportunity to achieve the best possible progress and development, taking into account their own unique characteristics, abilities, interests and learning needs.
- All children have the right to enjoy a full and active life which helps them to engage in and enrich the wider community, irrespective of individual needs and background.
- Play is a vital component of a child's life: an essential activity through which children and young people come to understand themselves and the world around them in circumstances where they can take acceptable risks.³
- Children, young people and their families have experiences, ideas and opinions that should, by right, be engaged with, listened to and acted upon.⁴
- Effective relationships among providers and with the Local Authority are based on mutual trust, empathy and openness, with secure processes for collaboration and consultation.
- High quality provision stems from the commitment of all leaders and staff to shared vision and values.
- High quality leadership and management are needed in order to bring about continual improvement in professional practice.
- High performing organisations value and promote continuing personal and professional development for all staff and leaders.
- High quality provision values diversity and promotes community cohesion.
- High quality provision embraces creativity and innovation.

WHO IS THE POLICY FOR?

This policy establishes South Gloucestershire Council's approach and commitment to high quality in all aspects of early years and childcare provision, wherever it may be found within the full range of local settings.

The word **"setting"** is used throughout the policy as generic term which covers all provision: nurseries, before-school (or "breakfast") clubs, after-school clubs, holiday play schemes, play services, childminders and other home-based carers, pre-schools, crèches, parent-toddler groups, children's centres, schools and extended service schools.

The word **"provider"** refers to those responsible for each setting.

KEY PARTNERS

The Council is committed to locating its services increasingly close to the communities which it serves. South Gloucestershire's Locality Hubs will play a key role in organising and promoting access to the range of support for early years and childcare which the Local Authority provides, either directly or through its many partners.

The Local Authority's active partnership with early years and childcare providers is supported by close collaboration with a wide range of locally-based organisations, including the Primary Care Trust, Strategic Health Authority, National Health Trusts, Jobcentre Plus, colleges of further education, universities, private training providers, Barnardo's and Children's Playlink.

The Local Authority also benefits from and has regard to the support and guidance from a range of national organisations, including SureStart, the Primary National Strategy, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) and its subsidiary the National Assessment Agency (NAA), Ofsted, the Children's Workforce Development Council, Together for Children and the National Children's Bureau.



CONTEXT

This policy exists in the context of South Gloucestershire's vision for children and young people and within a wider framework of legislation and policy.

South Gloucestershire's Charter for Children and Young People

We will strive to make South Gloucestershire a place where all children and young people have the best possible start in life and are involved in shaping the future, and where they:

- enjoy the best possible physical and mental health and live a healthy lifestyle;
- are safeguarded, protected from harm and neglect and feel safe and secure at all times;
- have encouragement and excellent opportunities to learn, play, enjoy and achieve wherever they are;
- have the opportunity to achieve their aspirations, be creative, and play a full and positive part in their communities;
- grow up in strong and secure families and vibrant communities, and achieve rewarding adult lives.

To support this we will work to provide really good services which put children, young people and their families first and:

- involve children, young people and their families;
- work with localities and communities;
- join up and integrate our work together.

³ See South Gloucestershire's Play Policy for a full description of the Local Authority's commitment to play.

⁴ From South Gloucestershire's Participation Strategy.

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The Early Years Foundation Stage

South Gloucestershire Council endorses the themes and principles set out for early years and childcare provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage framework. These interdependent ideas underpin our vision for high quality provision for children and young people of all ages and support our commitment to an “holistic” approach to developing the whole child.

A Unique Child

Principle: Every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

Positive Relationships

Principle: Children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or a key person.

Enabling Environments

Principle: The environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children’s development and learning.

Learning and Development

Principle: Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates and all areas of Learning and Development are equally important and interconnected.

(A more detailed summary of the EYFS Framework and welfare requirements is set out in Appendix 2.)

Statutory duties

Local authorities and early years and childcare providers are legally obliged to undertake a range of duties to ensure that the learning, development, health, safety and well-being of children are secured. This includes legislation which establishes the statutory learning, development and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, including assessment under the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and specifies minimum requirements for registration with Ofsted. The Local Authority is also required to take steps to ensure that its own officers and local settings comply with relevant aspects of more general employment laws, anti-discriminatory legislation, health and safety legislation, data collection regulations and legislation regarding special educational needs, safeguarding, child protection and the duty of care.

(A list of the most significant laws governing early years and childcare provision are set out in Appendix 3)

Safeguarding

It is of paramount importance that children are safe. Every provider and Local Authority representative has a responsibility to ensure that procedures and practices in Child Protection and Health & Safety are securely in place and are effectively implemented.

“All those who came into contact with children and their families in their everyday work, including people who do not have a specific role in relation to child protection, have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Registered providers of day care services must recognise their responsibilities towards those in their care and be aware of the procedures they should follow if they suspect that a child may have been abused or neglected.”

Child Protection Procedure for Independent Day Care Providers
- South Gloucestershire Children and Young People’s
Information Service

Monitoring, supporting and challenging

South Gloucestershire Local Authority undertakes three key functions in working with individual early years and childcare settings to support continuous quality improvement: monitoring, supporting and challenging. In each case, some activity is undertaken for all settings while additional activity will be undertaken where particular attention needs to be targeted. *(This is described in more detail on Appendix 1: Working Practices.)*

Monitoring

This is the systematic work Local Authority undertakes to collect and analyse information about the provision and achievement in each setting and across South Gloucestershire. The Local Authority also routinely analyses the information made available by Ofsted and the Department for Children, Schools and Families. The monitoring of each setting is undertaken in partnership with the provider and takes into account the findings of the setting’s own self-evaluation processes.

Supporting

This is the process by which the Local Authority works in partnership with settings to identify and address specific improvements. Support may be provided directly by the Local Authority’s employees or by other organisation working on its behalf. Agreement will be reached with each setting to ensure that support and improvement are timely and appropriate.

Challenging

Successful settings continually challenge themselves to improve. The Local Authority has the responsibility to ensure that their self-evaluation and improvement planning are informed by high expectations of quality and achievement.



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Grant Funding

South Gloucestershire's specification of its local conditions for the release of Nursery Education Grant (NEG), Revenue Grant and Capital Grant includes the providers' involvement in continuous quality improvement. By accepting these conditions, providers are making a commitment to securing high quality provision for all children.



Learning, development and welfare

- Early Years and Childcare provision plays a vital part in local efforts to ensure that all children benefit from a safe and happy childhood in which they are able to thrive. These two dimensions (Welfare and Learning & Development) depend on each other for success, because children of all ages will find it hard to flourish unless they feel safe and valued, enjoy good health and live in families which benefit from our society and its economy. So when children are formally placed in the care of any provider there is an expectation that this will bring benefits to their learning and development as well as ensuring their safety and well-being.
- An understanding of quality is also crucial to the Local Authority's duty to assess and secure the sufficiency of places. Under the Childcare Act (2006) it is clear that "sufficiency" is no longer simply a matter of matching numbers of places to numbers of children. In assessing sufficiency, the Local Authority has not only to consider the availability, flexibility, sustainability and affordability of provision, but also its quality and the extent to which it is inclusive of all children. This includes ensuring that parents have a choice of the type of childcare they require at different times. South Gloucestershire Council will work in partnership with the Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) sector to ensure sufficient high quality childcare.
- Evaluation of the quality of a setting must place equal importance on learning, development and welfare. This perspective is shared by Ofsted and the Local Authority and should be an integral feature of the self-evaluation undertaken by each provider. South Gloucestershire will support continuous improvement of our local early years and childcare provision by focusing on all aspects of quality improvement, including professional development and business sustainability.

Inclusion

Inclusion should be at the heart of all that practitioners value and aim for in their care of children and young people. In high quality inclusive provision practitioners will:

- recognise that everyone has equality of opportunity and a contribution to make irrespective of any learning difficulty or disability and irrespective of their gender, age, culture, religion, ethnicity or social circumstances;
- welcome, value and celebrate differences;
- take positive steps to remove barriers so that all can participate fully;
- promote early intervention, identifying those who have additional needs and make adjustments so that all children and young people flourish;
- adopt an holistic approach to meeting the needs of vulnerable children by working in partnership with parents and families, the Local Authority and other agencies, including the voluntary sector;
- follow processes and practices which stem from relevant legislation; and
- regularly access training and professional development to inform, support and develop their inclusive practice.



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QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

We want South Gloucestershire to be a great place to live and work, where children, young people and their families are entitled to expect us to strive for excellence in our early years and childcare provision. The Council is committed to the promotion of effective Quality Improvement systems to support the achievement of excellence.

Quality improvement is a continuous process designed to achieve increasingly good provision. It is rooted in secure **self-evaluation**. A commitment to achieving the standards required under a scheme for **quality assurance** offers significant support to quality improvement systems. All three processes should be closely linked to the training and professional development of staff and leaders.

Quality Improvement

- Quality improvement is a continuous process which aims to increase the extent to which children and their families enjoy and benefit from the provision they experience. It is a long-term journey not a short-term project. Quality Improvement is inherently forward-looking; it is about aspiration for the future not blame for the past and it assumes that all settings, however strong, can improve further.
- In making a commitment to continuous quality improvement, the Council is declaring its belief that all providers and settings can make things better for children and families by:
 - learning new skills;
 - changing the ways they do things;
 - being clearer about their shared values and beliefs;
 - setting targets or goals for improvement; and
 - changing what people in their organisation say and do.
- South Gloucestershire Council believes that quality improvement in any organisation requires an external perspective. The Local Authority will focus the work of its officers and its partner agencies on the core task of building the capacity of all settings and providers to lead their own quality improvement.

Quality Assurance

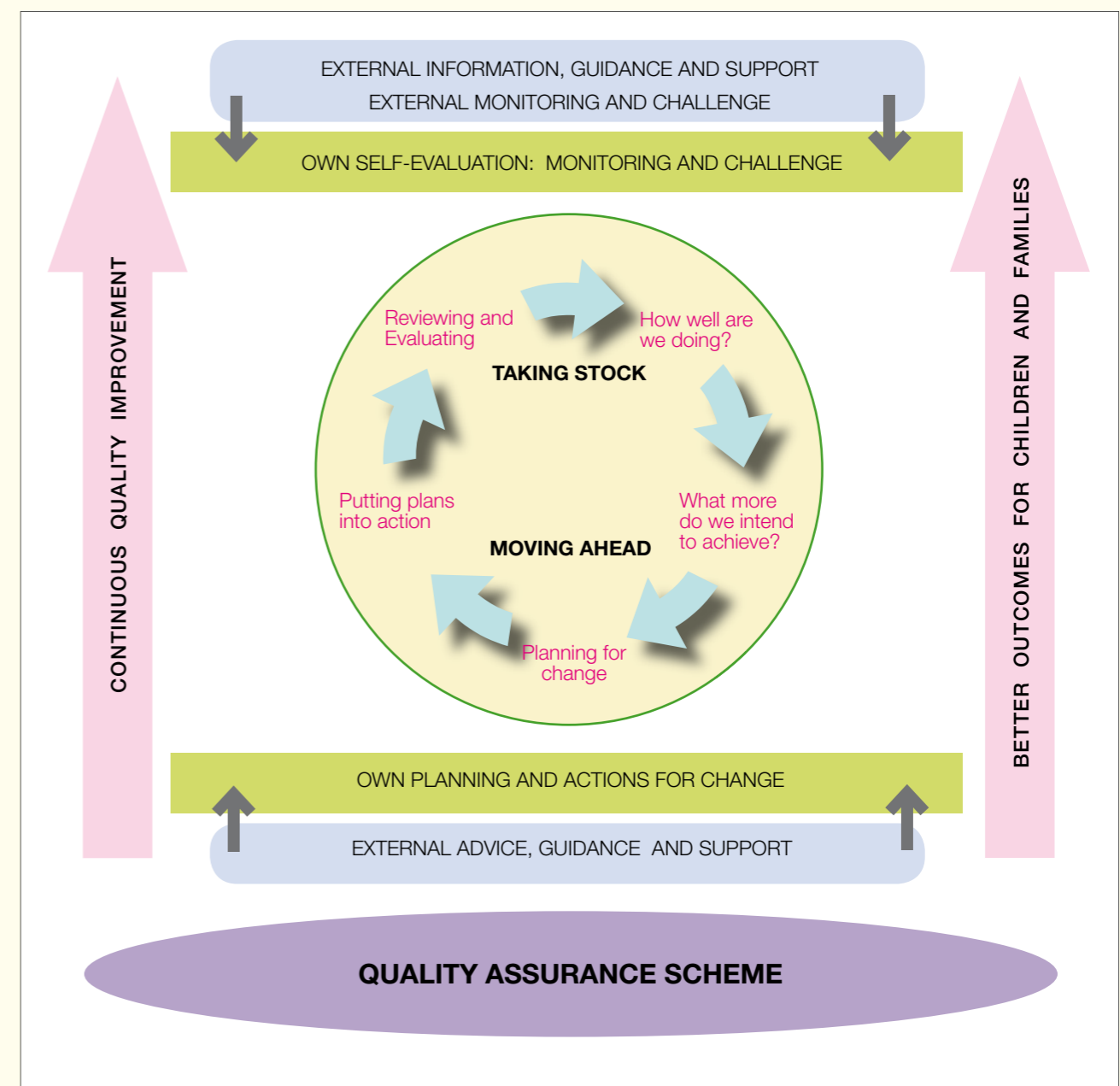
- Quality assurance is a formal process by which settings are externally recognised and rewarded for reaching agreed standards of provision. It is based on an assumption that the setting aspires to offer provision which is better than the minimum required.
- Working towards formal recognition within a quality assurance scheme supports a setting's quality improvement processes by providing a framework for considering key aspects of its work. Settings which successfully meet the standards for their chosen quality assurance scheme invariably improve the quality of their work and achieve better outcomes for their children and families. They also improve staff engagement and loyalty through professional development.
- South Gloucestershire Council endorses the National Quality Improvement Network (NQIN) principles which set a benchmark against which quality assurance programmes should be evaluated. (See Appendix 4 for details of the NQIN principles.)
- The Local Authority will provide advice, support and guidance to settings in selecting a quality assurance scheme which meets nationally recognised criteria and working towards the achievement of its standards.

Self-evaluation

- Self evaluation is a process by which settings gather evidence about their work and achievements in order to learn about their strengths and relative weaknesses. It is an essential part of both quality improvement and quality assurance. Self-evaluation includes the process of prioritising and planning for specific aspects of development.
- Good self-evaluation:
 - involves the whole setting and seeks the views and contributions of all staff, children, parents and families;
 - uses a clear framework to shape a setting's judgements about its own strengths and areas for improvement in all key aspects of its work; and

- benefits from some external advice and support to make sense of the framework and to help individual settings reach a better understanding of their own work in the context of stronger and weaker practice seen elsewhere.

- South Gloucestershire Council believes that all settings need to undertake effective self-evaluation, supported by an appropriate framework. The Council is committed to providing the best possible advice, support and guidance to help settings strengthen their own capacity for accurate self-evaluation.



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WORKING TOGETHER TO ACHIEVE EXCELLENCE

South Gloucestershire Council is committed to working in partnership with all who contribute to the provision of local high quality childcare. This goes beyond simply securing provision which meets minimum requirements. Rather, it is rooted in the conviction that all children and young people in South Gloucestershire deserve the best provision it is possible to achieve, whatever the nature and status of the setting. In seeking continuous quality improvement, each member of this partnership has a vital contribution to make.

The Local Authority's responsibilities

- Secure the best quality provision for all children and young people across the authority, through reflection, self-evaluation and continuous improvement.
- Ensure that providers are aware of the Local Authority's services and those of organisations working on its behalf.
- Ensure that providers are increasingly secure in making self evaluation judgements about their practice and provision and in planning for improvement.
- Monitor, support and challenge providers in self-evaluation and continuous quality improvement.
- Listen to, respect and act on the views of children and young people, their families and all stakeholders.
- Provide appropriate and up-to-date information, advice and guidance, and respond appropriately to any complaint about its service.
- Secure and promote professional development and training at all levels and in all sectors.
- Ensure that there is sufficient⁵ childcare to meet the needs of parents and families.
- Report on instances where children's safety or well being is at risk.
- Prioritise the deployment of its resources according to need.
- Identify, celebrate and promote good practice.
- Continually work to improve its own knowledge, skills, systems and processes and to strengthen the contribution these make to continuous quality improvement.
- Ensure that policies and practice are inclusive of all children and value diversity.



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⁵ In the context of early years and childcare provision, 'sufficient' is defined not simply in terms of numbers of places, but also in terms of the range and quality available, taking into account the extent to which it is flexible, accessible, high quality, affordable, inclusive and sustainable.

Providers' responsibilities

- Keep the Local Authority informed of needs and circumstances.
- Meet all required conditions of Ofsted registration and (where appropriate) the Nursery Education Grant Code of Practice.
- Adopt and make good use of relevant frameworks and tools for self-evaluation.
- Know their strengths and weaknesses through well-evidenced self-evaluation, reflection and quality assurance.
- Celebrate and share their own good practice.
- Address identified priorities through the effective implementation of an appropriate action plan, continually reviewing and reflecting on progress.
- Provide opportunities for professional development and training, according to the needs of the organisation and its individual staff, and ensure its positive impact on continuous improvement.
- Listen to and act on the views of children, young people and their families.
- Ensure that their policies and practice are inclusive of all children and value diversity.
- Plan for and secure their own sustainability.
- Establish and maintain positive and respectful partnerships with families and their local communities.
- Build on the advice, information and training they receive to secure improvement.
- Support children and young people's effective transitions between schools and settings by sharing and making effective use of relevant information.

APPENDIX 1 : Working Practices

PROMOTING SUCCESS

- In supporting quality improvement, South Gloucestershire seeks to identify and promote highly effective practice across all major aspects of the work of early years and childcare settings:
 - organisation and staffing
 - safety and welfare
 - children's learning and development
 - inclusive provision
 - business and financial management
- The Local Authority has a central role in identifying, celebrating and promoting the strengths and successes of South Gloucestershire settings. The Local Authority will focus attention on promoting particularly effective aspects of the work of providers who:
 - lead and manage effective and innovative practice;
 - receive exceptionally positive Ofsted inspection reports;
 - achieve recognised awards; and
 - implement significant improvements in the work of their settings.
- The Local Authority will also set out to learn about highly effective practice and significant research and development wherever it is found - regionally, nationally and across the wider world. It will do this through close partnership with local and national agencies and organisations and through collaboration with providers of further and higher education and training.
- The Local Authority will seek to ensure that information about local successes, leading practice and current thinking continuously strengthens the advice, guidance and training available to South Gloucestershire's settings.
- The Local Authority will seek to celebrate and promote effective practice through letters, events, meetings, publications, visits, development projects, training and professional development activity and the increasingly widespread use of

electronic communication, including the continual development of the Local Authority's website.

LOCAL AUTHORITY SUPPORT

Most settings sustain their own continual quality improvement with the basic level of support routinely offered by the Local Authority, including the universal information, advice and guidance made available through the website, publications and training. From time to time, however, individual settings may require more than the usual level of support for quality improvement in order to achieve their goals. Over and above its duty to provide general information, advice and guidance to all settings, the Local Authority has a responsibility to secure such further support where this is required. This support falls into two broad categories. In each case the Local Authority will work closely with the setting both to plan the support and to monitor and evaluate its impact.

The Local Authority has a duty to monitor the work and outcomes of schools and settings. Representatives of relevant sections of the Department for Children and Young People will meet regularly to share information. These meetings will contribute to the Local Authority's role in:

- identifying good practice;
- promoting collaborative working;
- evaluating the impact of support;
- identifying issues to be addressed;
- establishing appropriate support.

Additional Support

A small amount of additional support will be provided where the Local Authority and setting agree that this is required in order to ensure that the intended improvements are achieved within a reasonable timescale and to a sufficiently high quality. The amount and nature of this support will be agreed with the setting, within the resources available to the Local Authority and as determined by individual service managers.



Priority Support

Where a setting has been deemed inadequate by Ofsted following an inspection, it will be a priority for the Local Authority to arrange a more significant programme of support. This higher level of support may also be provided to settings which have not been recently inspected but where the Local Authority and setting agree that, were Ofsted to inspect in the immediate future, an overall judgement of inadequate would be likely. The amount and nature of this support will be agreed with the setting, within the resources available to the Local Authority; it will be determined by the relevant service manager in consultation with other service managers and in line with the Local Authority's procedure.

Inadequate provision

In order to secure prompt improvement, the Local Authority has developed a detailed procedure for supporting settings which receive an inadequate judgement on inspection. This is to ensure that settings in such a position receive appropriate and timely support and can achieve significant improvement within an agreed timescale. (Separate arrangements exist for nursery and reception classes in maintained schools, as set out in the Council's School Improvement Policy.) This procedure may be updated from time to time to ensure that it is as effective as possible. The same process will be undertaken for settings which have not recently been inspected but also require significant improvement.

The main steps in this procedure are as follows:

- The setting takes immediate action to rectify any significant shortcomings in respect of issues concerning the health and/or safety of the children, where necessary seeking and responding positively to Local Authority advice.
- The Local Authority contacts the provider to arrange a meeting to consider the implications of the issues identified for improvement.
- The Local Authority works in partnership with the provider to identify key steps required to help secure improvement in the identified issues.
- The provider draws up an action plan designed to achieve the necessary improvements.
- The Local Authority coordinates the contribution of its officers and others working on its behalf to support the setting.
- The Local Authority visits the setting from time to time as appropriate to support the provider's review of the implementation of its action plan and to agree adaptations to the plan where necessary.
- After re-inspection of settings judged inadequate, the Local Authority will complete any remaining actions agreed in the action plan.

In attempting to secure significant improvement in a setting, Local Authorities are not required to provide unlimited support. The Local Authority will support an inadequate provider with a level of advice and training

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through which it is reasonable to expect the setting to be able to manage its own improvement. However, the Local Authority reserves the right to terminate such support where insufficient progress is being made in addressing the significant issues and building the setting's capacity for sustaining an acceptable quality of provision. In these circumstances the setting may decide to close or remain open.

i. In the case of closure, the Local Authority will provide information to the provider on the procedures to be followed in order to achieve a smooth closure, with due notice for parents. It is the responsibility of the setting to inform Ofsted of its intention to close.

ii. In the case of a setting remaining open, the Local Authority would write a letter to the Committee Chair or owner setting out the recommendations made by Ofsted and the advice offered by the Local Authority. If satisfactory improvements are not made within the agreed timescales specified by Ofsted, the Local Authority will then inform Ofsted of the situation. It is the responsibility of Ofsted to determine whether re-inspection is required.

iii. Where there has been no recent inspection, but the Local Authority judges that, despite significant and sustained support, a setting is offering inadequate provision, the Local Authority reserves the right to inform Ofsted. It is the responsibility of Ofsted to determine what action to take.

Within the Local Authority, each service which supports settings will have its own systems and its own pattern of activity, including visits. These are determined by the requirements of individual services, within the resources available to them and within the framework of statutory requirements under which it operates. Some services will operate a regular cycle of activity while others will be predominantly responsive to need as it arises.

- For services which focus on meeting the needs of individual children and families, the Local Authority may provide additional visits to settings as required.
- For services which focus on improving the general provision made by each setting, the Local Authority has established arrangements by which extra support will be allocated and focused.

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT VISITS

A range of services and agencies may visit settings. Some of these visits are to undertake casework regarding specific individual children; other visits are to support general improvement in the quality of provision. Where "casework" visits are undertaken, the content and format of the visit note will be determined by the individual service and may well contain sensitive information. Where visits are intended to monitor and support aspects of the general quality of welfare, learning and development, these are regarded as "quality improvement" visits.

Protocol for quality improvement visits

To help ensure that quality improvement visits run smoothly and are as beneficial as possible, the following protocols should be observed.

The setting

Settings being visited will:

- keep to the timetable and focus agreed for the visit;
- ensure that appropriate practitioners are available to meet the officer(s);
- be in a position to discuss progress with actions agreed during previous meetings and work undertaken to build on recent training;
- provide the Local Authority's representative with appropriate access to rooms and spaces used by children; and
- provide suitable time and an appropriate room or space for the officer's meeting with the practitioner(s) and manager.

The Local Authority's representative

When visiting settings, the Local Authority's representative will:

- be prompt, courteous and well-prepared;
- work in the best interests of the children, their families and the provider;
- respect confidentiality;
- identify themselves, display official identification and comply with the setting's arrangements for security;

- use their discretion to judge which issues to raise with practitioners and which to raise with leaders or managers; and
- provide a verbal report and a visit note for the leader/manager.

Quality Improvement Visit Notes

- Whenever officers of the Local Authority or those working on its behalf visit a setting as part of the general support for quality improvement, a quality improvement visit note will be completed. Visits which are focused on the specific needs of individual children will be recorded in a manner determined by the needs and requirements of individual services. Not all of the features of quality improvement visit notes will be appropriate to casework visits.

- The function of quality improvement visit notes is to:

- communicate information;
- record the outcomes of visits, including significant findings from the setting's own self-evaluation;
- provide a summary record of:
 - i. recent progress by the setting;
 - ii. the outcomes of discussions which took place during the visit;
 - iii. agreed future actions by the setting and the Local Authority;
- provide evidence to support the Local Authority's evaluation of activity under the Children and Young People Plan.

- Quality improvement visit notes are confidential to the headteacher/leader/manager and to the Chair of Governors/Chair of Committee/Owner. These individuals may choose to share any particular visit note more widely, but this may not be appropriate where the visit note contains sensitive information.

- For quality improvement visits, it is expected that:
 - visit notes will provide a clear and concise summary of the visit and will not record every detail of the discussion;
 - the content of visit notes, including the recommendations and future actions, will be agreed with the provider at the end of each visit;

- visit notes will recognise and record the outcomes of the review of progress made by the setting since the last visit by the service in question and will also record any impact that such actions are reported to have had on the quality of provision;
 - visit notes will record areas identified for further improvement and any associated training and development activity which needs to be undertaken, with timescales;
 - visit notes will be written in the third person;
 - visit notes will not name individual children; and
 - visit notes which contain sensitive information about an individual adult (e.g., concerning weak practice) will not name that individual.
- In some circumstances, attachments to visit notes may be created to record essential additional detailed information and advice.



APPENDIX 2 : Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early years Foundation Stage is set out in three main sections: A Principled Approach; The Learning and Development requirements; and The Welfare requirements.

1. A PRINCIPLED APPROACH

• A Unique Child

Principle: Every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

1. Child development
Child development; a skilful communicator; a competent learner
2. Inclusive practice
Equality and diversity; children's entitlements; early support
3. Keeping safe
Being safe and protected; discovering boundaries; making choices
4. Health and wellbeing
Growing and developing; physical well-being; emotional well-being

• Positive Relationships

Principle: Children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or a key person.

1. Respecting each other
Understanding feelings; friendships; professional relationships
2. Parents as partners
Respecting diversity; communication; learning together
3. Supporting learning
Positive interactions; listening to children; effective teaching
4. Key Person
Secure attachment; shared care; independence

• Enabling Environments

Principle: The environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning.

1. Observation, assessment and planning
Starting with the child; planning; assessment
2. Supporting every child
Children's needs; the learning journey; working together
3. The learning environment
the emotional environment; the outdoor environment; the indoor environment
4. The wider context
Transitions and continuity; multi-agency working; the community

• Learning and Development

Principle: Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates and all areas of Learning and Development are equally important and inter-connected.

1. Play and exploration
learning through experience; adult involvement; contexts for learning
2. Active learning
Mental and physical involvement; decision making; personalised learning
3. Creativity and critical thinking
Making connections; transforming understanding; sustained shared thinking
4. Areas of learning and development
Personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; problem-solving, reasoning and numeracy; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development; creative development



2. THE LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS

Regardless of type, size, or funding, all early years providers must by law deliver the learning requirements. There are three elements:

- the early learning goals
- the educational programmes and
- the assessment arrangements

The early learning goals

There are six areas of learning which are equally important and depend on each other to support a rounded approach to child development:

- personal, social and emotional development
- communication, language and literacy
- problem-solving, reasoning and numeracy
- knowledge and understanding of the world
- physical development
- creative development

The educational programme

The early learning goals establish the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Detailed guidance on the early learning goals and how to work with children to achieve them is set out in the Practice Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The assessment arrangements

Ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process. Providers must ensure that practitioners are observing children and responding appropriately to help them make progress. Assessment is based on observation of what children are doing in their day-to-day activities, predominantly children's self-initiated activities, and should be informed by the contributions of all significant adults including parents.

The EYFS Profile is a way of summing up each child's development and learning achievements. It should inform assessment at various times during the Early Years Foundation Stage. At the end of the EYFS providers must ensure that all children are assessed against all thirteen scales and report these outcomes through the specified means by the end of June in the school year when children reach their fifth birthday.

3. THE WELFARE REQUIREMENTS

Overview of the welfare requirements

All settings, regardless of type, size or funding must meet the welfare requirements, whether based on general or specific legal requirements. Providers must comply with all the legal requirements set out and should have regard to the statutory guidance. The requirements are set out in three sections:

- overarching general legal requirements;
- specific legal requirements;
- statutory guidance.

The general welfare requirements

1. Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare

- The provider must take necessary steps to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- The provider must promote the good health of the children, take necessary steps to prevent the spread of infection, and take appropriate action when they are ill.
- Children's behaviour must be managed effectively and in a manner appropriate for their stage of development and particular individual needs.

2. Suitable people

- Providers must ensure that adults looking after children, or having unsupervised access to them, are suitable to do so.
- Adults looking after children must have appropriate qualifications, training, skills and knowledge.
- Staffing arrangements must be organised to ensure safety and to meet the needs of the children.

3. Suitable premises, environment and equipment

- Outdoor and indoor spaces, furniture, equipment and toys must be safe and suitable for their purpose.

4. Organisation

- Providers must plan and organise their systems to ensure that every child receives an enjoyable and challenging learning and development experience that is tailored to meet their individual needs.

5. Documentation

- Providers must maintain records, policies and procedures required for the safe and efficient management of the settings and to meet the needs of the children.

APPENDIX 3 : Legislative Framework

It is a statutory requirement for the Local Authority to meet specified duties under the following acts:

- The Childcare Act 2006
- Statutory Framework Early Years Foundation Stage 2007 (Learning and Development Requirements) Order 2007 Section 39 (1) (a) Childcare Act 2006.
- Ofsted Childcare register (Compulsory and Voluntary)
- The Children Act 2004
- The Children Act 1989
- The Education Act 1996 (later amended by the SEN and Disability Act 2001)
- The Education Act 2002
- The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- The Employment and Training Act 1973
- The Local Authority Social Services Act 1970

The Local Authority is also expected to have regard to any guidance given from time to time by the Secretary of State.



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APPENDIX 4 : Quality assurance principles and values

NATIONAL QUALITY IMPROVEMENT NETWORK (NQIN)

Quality Improvement Principles

A Framework for Local Authorities and National Organisations to Improve Quality Outcomes for Children and Young People

Principle 1 - Guide and support settings to improve outcomes

Quality improvement should focus all settings on the five Every Child Matters (ECM) outcomes, plus an equalities outcome:

- Be healthy
- Stay safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well-being
- Be equal – feel you belong

Improving outcomes also involves narrowing the gap between disadvantaged children and their peers. The government is focusing particularly on improving outcomes for looked-after children and children with special education needs and disabilities.

Principle 2 - Encourage settings to be inclusive and reduce inequalities

Certain children and young people face inequalities due to their personal abilities, their family situation, or the ethnic, religious or socio-economic group from which they come. The range of inclusion issues is wide. Quality improvement should ensure that everyone involved in the setting complies with anti-discriminatory legislation, eliminates discrimination that is not covered by legislation, and actively promotes equality of opportunity/treatment and good relations between people who are different from one another.

Principle 3 - Strengthen values and principles in settings

Quality improvement should enable people in settings to make changes to the way they think and feel about their work. It is essential that high quality practice flows from positive beliefs, values and principles that are sound, clear and backed by personal and professional commitment.

Principle 4 - Promote effective practice and its delivery in settings

Practice that is promoted to settings should be based on research and authoritative sources. Effective practice develops over time and quality improvement should keep up to date and support innovation in settings. Effective practice should be defined and explained in standards and case studies. Quality improvement should show settings how to improve their practice.

Principle 5 - Increase the capacity of settings to improve quality

This Quality Improvement Principle focuses on increasing the capacity of settings to improve their own quality through reflective practice, peer observation, and engagement with children and families. Settings can learn skills and techniques that embed self-evaluation and extend the impact of any Quality Improvement Programme or Scheme. Quality improvement does not rely heavily on a tick-box approach.

Principle 6 - Promote integrated working within and among settings

Integrated working combines two major strands:

1. Bringing practitioners from a wide range of professional backgrounds into close working partnership around individual children.
2. Ensuring settings are fully networked with a range of services.

Principle 7 - Challenge and support key people in settings to lead quality improvement

Without strong management and leadership, quality improvement will not make real, sustainable progress. Much depends on the key people within settings, and quality improvement needs to identify and support them.

Principle 8 - Build on settings' proven workforce development strategies

Building the skills and motivation of the workforce has a real impact on the quality experienced by children. High morale, low staff turnover and teams that perform have a direct, positive effect on the quality experienced by children, young people and families.

Principle 9 - Support settings through the self-evaluation and improvement processes

The people, materials and procedures involved in supporting quality improvement must be of high quality and meet the needs of settings at all stages in the process, right through to accreditation and the ongoing quality improvement tools.

Principle 10 - Local authorities and national organisations monitor quality improvement and communicate achievements

Local authorities and national organisations need to build awareness of quality improvement and its benefits among stakeholders and funders, so that support for quality improvement is maintained.

Principle 11 - Local authorities and national organisations ensure quality improvement is achievable, continuous and sustainable

Quality improvement is a medium / long-term approach that needs investment and development over many years. Quality improvement and quality assurance schemes should also work to maintain their effectiveness through regular scheme renewal.

Principle 12 - Schemes operate fair, inclusive and transparent accreditation processes

Independent assessment or validation of progress on quality improvement achievement is a very valuable incentive for settings. Accreditation judgements must be rigorous, consistent, defensible and capable of clear communication.



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